

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

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DEMOCRATS TO BUSH-BLAIR: LET'S HAVE THE FACTS BEHIND IRAQ'S NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES

40 Democrats Sign Markey Letter Asking Bush to Request Niger Intelligence from Blair

WASHINGTON, DC- On the eve of British Prime Minister Tony Blair's state visit to Washington, Representative Edward Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, and 40 of his Democratic colleagues today sent a letter to President Bush requesting him to ask Prime Minister Blair for everything he knows about Iraq's supposed interest in acquiring uranium from Niger and other African nations. The letter was prompted by concerns that President Bush used erroneous information in his State of the Union address regarding the threat posed by reported Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction, and is now justifying it on the basis of British intelligence that our own CIA has apparently never seen nor can vouch for.

Rep. Markey said, "Iraq's intention to obtain uranium from Niger has been widely discredited. President Bush should ask British Prime Minister Blair to turn over all relevant Iraqi intelligence, regardless of the source, in order for both leaders to come clean with the American people and the world."

The letter points out that this week the President has an opportunity to clarify the basis for his statement in the State of the Union speech that: *'The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.'*

"In recent days, Administration officials have defended this statement as "technically accurate" and argued that the British government has stood by its conclusion -- based on intelligence information that has not been fully disclosed to the United States."

"We note that you will be meeting with British Prime Minister Tony Blair this week. We believe that this meeting affords you an opportunity to formally ask the British Government to fully disclose to the U.S. all of the intelligence information upon which they have based their findings and conclusions regarding alleged Iraqi efforts to obtain uranium from Africa.

The lawmakers' letter goes on to call for President Bush to ask Prime Minister Blair "to contact whatever foreign governments provided the British with the intelligence information in question and obtain their agreement to releasing this information the U.S., so that Congress and the American public can be made aware of the full nature and veracity of the intelligence information that formed the basis for U.S.-British military action in Iraq."

The letter was signed by 40 Democratic Members, some of whom supported and some of whom opposed, the Iraq resolution in Congress, and can be found at <http://www.house.gov/markey>: Markey (MA); Meehan (MA); Wexler (FL); Jackson-Lee (TX); Diane Watson (CA); Doggett (TX); Inslee (WA); Stark (CA); Hoeffel (PA); Taylor (MS); McCarthy (MO); Israel (NY); Waxman (CA); Lee (CA); Berkley (NV); Abercrombie (HI); Udall (NM); Lewis (GA); Towns (NY); McDermott (WA); Capuano (MA); Bishop (GA); Olver (MA); Grijalva (AZ); Napolitano (CA); Brown (FL); Woolsey (CA); Pallone (NJ); Farr (CA); Honda (CA); Michaud (ME); DeGette (CO); Hinchey (NY); Norton (DC) Pascrell (NJ); Delahunt (MA); Rothman (NJ); Tauscher (CA); Slaughter (NY); Baldwin (WI).